

Colleges 'selling immigration'

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Further education colleges have been accused by the UK Border Agency of "selling immigration rather than education".

The agency said it had beefed up its Highly Trusted Status (HTS) requirements for colleges because of lower levels of compliance when compared with higher education.

"For too long we have seen educational institutions selling immigration rather than education, and too many students coming here to work rather than study," an agency spokesperson told *FE Week*.

"We saw the highest levels of compliance in the university

Continued on page 4



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Interview with David Igoe



FE Week speaks to the chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum

Page 5

Amarjit Basi goes global



New College Nottingham principal on international partnerships

Page 7

Elizabeth Delaney gets legal



Lawyer explores new education laws and their impact on colleges

Page 7

Campus round-up



Gloucestershire College students strut their stuff on the catwalk, and more...

Page 8

inside...

Subcontracting triples

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Funding figures expose boom in colleges' apprenticeship deals

The amount that colleges spend on apprenticeship subcontractors has more than trebled in a year to £66.7m, *FE Week* can reveal.

Figures from the Skills Funding Agency also show a boom in the number of deals. In the 2010/11 academic year they averaged 2.4 for each college, compared with 4.2 in the first nine months of last year.

The growth comes despite an agency warning, in its annual reports and accounts document for 2011/12, that subcontracting was "exposing the agency to higher levels of operational and financial risk".

It added: "Recent changes to policy, for example implementing a minimum contract level, have increased the need for subcontracting throughout the sector."

"However, the prime driver has been the requirement to maintain the proportion of the adult skills budget earmarked for apprenticeships."

Association of Colleges policy manager Teresa Frith defended the use of subcontractors. She said it made "sound financial and educational sense to ask focused niche experts to provide a service for the college rather than to establish departments from scratch".

She added: "As a result of changes directed from the centre, colleges have necessarily had to undertake extra subcontracting."

"This does not mean they have had to increase the workload, or divested responsibility — it simply means the delivery arrangements for certain

courses have changed."

Just under £22m of agency cash filtered through 85 colleges to subcontractors last year, according to figures released under the Freedom of Information Act.

But this year, more than £66m went to subcontractors from 146 colleges. And the number of deals has grown from 208 last year to 607 — an increase of 192 per cent.

The figures come amid an ongoing Serious Fraud Office (SFO) investigation into subcontractor Luis Michael Training (LMT). Three men, aged 29, 51 and 52, were arrested, questioned and bailed earlier this year. They remain on bail.

Subcontracting for eight FE colleges, LMT did apprenticeships at football clubs including Leeds, Millwall and Nottingham Forest.

Allegations against the now-defunct firm, which was based in Newport and run by former Welsh international footballer Mark Aizlewood, related to work between 2009 and 2011.

An SFO spokesperson said at the time of the arrests: "It is believed LMT fraudulently overstated the number of students and apprenticeships that they had placed. The suspected offences include fraudulent trading, false accounting and forgery."

But the threat of similar accusations against other subcontractors has not stopped colleges using their services.

West Nottinghamshire College, for example, last year made eight deals at £524,700. That grew to 27 subcontractors and £3.2m this year.

However, vice principal Graham Howe said safeguards were in place.

"Partnerships are a strategic theme of our college and have been part of our long-standing approach to employer-responsive provision," he said.

"We recognise the major contribution independent training providers make within FE and, as a college, we play an important role as a conduit of funding and in providing the critical support that allows these providers to function, develop and grow."

He insisted that heavy investment in supply chain management meant the college was exposed to "less risk, not more".

He added: "We constantly develop our systems and processes to manage risk within a disbursed delivery model. This ensures that our provision, wherever it is delivered, is of the highest quality."

At Hull College, three apprenticeship subcontractors last year cost £376,000. Now there are 24 — at a cost of £2.77m.

Principal Dr Elaine McMahon said: "We have worked with a range of partners as part of our contribution to delivering government policy and to secure apprenticeship growth."

"Alongside our own direct delivery we select partners who bring complementary capabilities in regeneration, upskilling, reskilling and supporting employment."

Editor's comment page 4

Edition 40

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Top Learner View tweets:



@tombennett71

Is there a 'Rate my Ofsted Inspectors' website?



@QualityPGCE

Another student satisfaction website is launched by Ofsted and used during inspection. Does this clash with £30 million FE Choices site?



@TweetYourSchool

Further education students are being invited to rate their college on a new website run by Ofsted... hmm..progress? Possibly...



@dmcmillanbsdc

@Ofstednews release Learner View as FE Choice provides irrelevant & dated info. What next for FE Choices?



@SchoolDuggery

I wonder if Ofsted's Learner View will be more successful than Parent View?

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LEPs shun 'fantastic' resource, says AoC

Chris Henwood

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Local enterprise partnerships are failing to take advantage of the "fantastic" education resources offered by colleges, the Association of Colleges (AoC) has claimed.

An association report has revealed "patchy" engagement between the two, with a lack of college representation on the 39 partnership boards and a lack of understanding of the role FE plays in economic growth - particularly in terms of engagement with employers and community.

The report, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Colleges, says: "The research identifies that the level and extent of engagement is still very patchy."

The partnership model was formed in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help to determine local economic priorities, and lead economic growth.

Julian Gravatt, AoC assistant chief executive, said: "Successful partnerships understand the importance of skills and the role of colleges but, disappointingly, the majority

still have work to do to tap into this fantastic resource."

The report highlighted the Gloucestershire partnership, GFirst, as an example of good practice. Established in June last year, it is supported by nine industry sector groups, each with skills sections in their business plans.

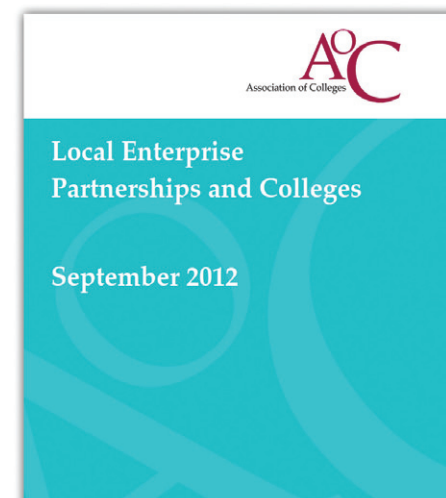
It also said that Tees Valley Unlimited and a partnership in Hertfordshire had a strategic commitment to skills.

Sue Hannan, employment, learning and skills manager at Tees Valley Unlimited, said: "We work closely at a strategic level with local colleges, both directly and through the AoC.

"Our team meet regularly with representatives of our local colleges, as well as other training providers who we consider to be key stakeholders in delivering our ambitions.

"We promote apprenticeships to learners and employers alike, and are involved in a number of initiatives to create new starts"

A Hertfordshire partnership spokesperson said: "We will play an influential role with businesses, colleges, universities and private providers to improve the skills of the existing workforce and those of young people entering the workforce.



"In particular, we want to better match skills to business needs."

Mr Gravatt said most colleges were focused on local economic development and could make a great contribution to the work of partnerships. "More often than not colleges play a central role in their local community beyond education and skills," he said.

"To get the best results the relationship between partnerships and colleges needs to be a two-way street."

College helps to save 500 jobs at First4Skills



From left: Kyle Humphreys apprentice and Elaine Bowker, principal of Liverpool Community College

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

A college and a training provider have saved more than 500 jobs after another provider went into administration.

Liverpool Community College teamed up with Derbyshire-based 3AAA to buy the English and Scottish elements of First4Skills business.

The Ellesmere Port-based firm, which was allocated £19.8m by the Skills Funding Agency this academic year to run around 10,000 apprenticeships, went into administration on September 21.

However, the Liverpool college stepped in three days later, following advice from 3AAA, to buy the firm, creating a new company under its old name and keeping existing staff.

The move has saved more than 500 jobs, although around 40 posts will be lost in Belfast, plus a number in Wales. The new firm, owned by the college, holds the agency contract.

The purchase was announced by Elaine Bowker, principal at the 17,000-student college.

"We worked closely with the agency to achieve this result," she said.

"It safeguards a large number of jobs and brings together the best practice of the public sector and the resources of the private sector to create an organisation that will be a market leader in apprenticeship training."

Ms Bowker added: "We've done quite a lot of work in terms of due diligence — we've gone into this with our eyes open.

"The firm had gone into administration because it couldn't service its debts to the bank. Once those were removed, it's quite a profitable company."

The new firm will have six directors — four from the college and two from 3AAA. Ms Bowker declined to say how much had been paid for First4Skills or whether 3AAA had contributed.

She did, however, say that 3AAA would not have a role in carrying out apprenticeship

provision for the new firm, but would continue to act in an "advisory" role.

A joint statement from 3AAA directors Peter Marples and Di McEvoy Robinson said: "Our joint venture, which will see 3AAA taking a leading role in the strategic direction of the business, is unique in the sector. This further underlines our philosophy that there is real power in harnessing the best of the public and private sectors."

First4Skills, which in August 2010 was given a good Ofsted grading for its work-based learning provision, had a national client base, including a number of major high street retailers.

An agency spokesperson said: "The college has guaranteed the delivery of the contract by the new firm.

"The contractual arrangements are in place and we are now in the position of monitoring delivery to ensure learning is being continued with minimum disruption and public funds remain protected."

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Ofsted has hit back at fears that its new Trip Adviser-style website for rating colleges could be open to abuse.

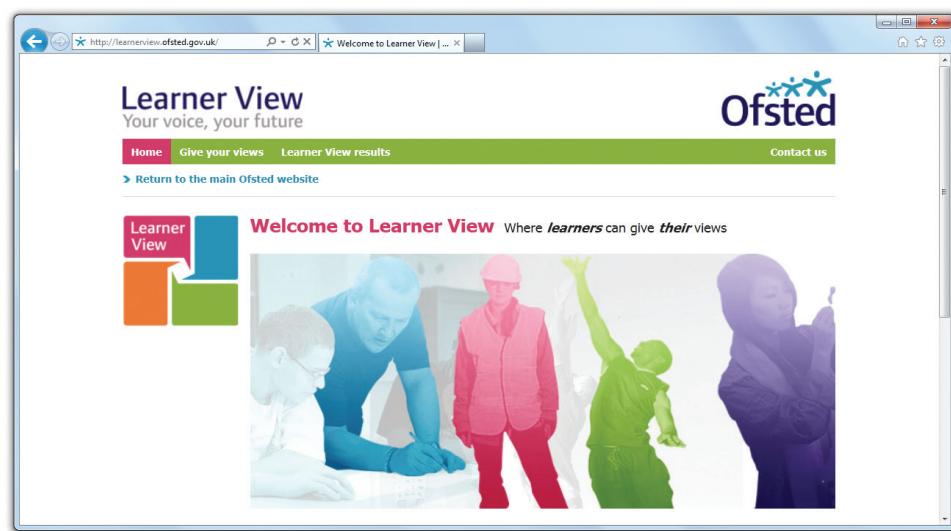
“There are always going to be concerns that there might be a campaign against a provider, but our security system means individual learners have to register,” said Ofsted’s national director for learning and skills, Matthew Coffey, who spoke to FE Week at the site’s official launch.

But he did admit that a student could set up 10 different email accounts — “there’s nothing to stop anyone doing that” — and register on the website with negative comments.

“But they would have to be intent on doing that. Where we see peaks like that come in, we would investigate them. We have invested heavily in security, have a digital communications team and are actively monitoring the site.”

Learner View, which cost £65,000 to develop and went live in time for Ofsted’s 2012/13 inspections, draws together the opinions of students about their courses and comes up with provider ratings.

Ofsted dismisses site abuse fears



Students are faced with statements such as ‘my course/programme meets my needs’ and ‘I receive the support I need to help me progress’. It then offers responses ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’.

The public can see the results, which are updated after every ten responses

And it was this live element of the website, previewed by FE Week last month, that

sparked fears of abuse.

The Association of Colleges’ director of policy, Joy Mercer, said that most colleges already had robust systems in place to capture the student experience and invested a lot of time in ensuring the student voice was heard.

“We hope Ofsted have thought through how to communicate its new system and this opportunity to students in a clear and sensi-

ble way that does not create any misuse.

“We are sure they have systems in place for dealing with potential problems such as the possibility of one student lodging multiple complaints.

“It is easy for one person to have more than one email address and submit multiple messages, which would escalate a complaint even if there is no real issue.

“We would very much like to be convinced Ofsted are able to monitor this system closely to avoid any abuses.”

But Mr Coffey further defended the website and its security. “The NUS and our learner panel quite liked the immediacy of Learner View; that what they think can be seen by people who can do something about it immediately.

“It gives an overview of what the student body is saying about their provider.

“But what is really important is that it doesn’t replace the interaction inspectors have with individual learners on individual courses.”

See page 6 for Learner View opinions

Apprenticeship minimum wage up 5p an hour

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The apprentice minimum wage remains “shockingly low” despite an increase that kicks in today, the National Union of Students said.

The figure is going up 5p to £2.65 an-hour for apprentices under 19, and for those aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship.

That’s £1.03 less than the rate for 16 and 17-year-old workers, and £2.33 less than what 18 to 20-year-olds get.

Meanwhile, the main rate — for workers aged 21 and over — has gone up 11p to £6.19.

Toni Pearce, NUS vice president with responsibility for FE, said “The disparity in the existing minimum wage on the basis of the employee’s age bracket is discriminatory and based on the questionable claim that younger workers are less productive than older ones,” she said.

“This is particularly odd when the evidence of the Low Pay Commission suggests the national minimum wage can be viewed as an efficiency wage, motivating workers, and provides a yet another argument in favour of equalisation.

“The £2.65 minimum is shockingly low, particularly given that many apprentices work full-time without taking days off for college.

“If the government is serious about apprenticeships, it should recognise that forcing young people to choose between this paltry wage and the prospect of full-time employment at the minimum wage is bound to put people off.

“Ministers should be promoting the good



Fred Grindrod, apprenticeships policy and campaigns officer at unionlearn

practice of the many employers who pay well above this rate.”

She added: “Enforcement of the minimum wage for apprentices is also a serious problem. Five per cent of respondents to BIS’s own 2011 pay survey said they didn’t receive any pay at all, and nearly half of the hairdressing group earned less than the minimum wage they should have received.”

However, John Longworth, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, had attacked the rise in March.

“While the pressures of inflation are hurting many people, especially the lowest-paid, this decision adds significantly to the cost of doing business, and feeds wage inflation at higher levels,” he said.

Fred Grindrod, apprenticeships policy and campaigns officer at the TUC’s learning and skills, unionlearn, said: “The apprentice rate has now been established without generating any detrimental side-effects.

“The number of apprentices has continued to increase. Given the strong growth in this sector and the value that apprentices generate for employers, we believe that there is room for more significant increases in this rate.”

Inspectors publish report on how colleges improve

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Unrealistic self-assessments with little or no critical insight, plus unexpected job cuts, show up time and again among poorly performing colleges, according to a new Ofsted report.

How Colleges Improve also warned colleges about the dangers of paying too much attention to building projects and mergers.

The report, which was released last week, also highlighted inconsistent tracking of learner progress, financial instability and defensive, inward-looking colleges being slow to accept change or to act when data showed decline.

Weaker colleges, the report added, often had a high proportion of temporary staff who were not properly managed.

And, mirroring the “Deptford not Delhi” fears of chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw that featured in FE Week a fortnight ago, there were also question marks over colleges’ “quest for new and fresh business, especially, abroad...to the detriment of current learners”.

But the report, commissioned by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and Ofsted, also listed where colleges had got it right.

Successful colleges, it said, had strong governance and management as well as a clear vision and direction. And good and outstanding colleges were not afraid of the self-assessment process — even if it was self-critical.

Ofsted’s national director for learning and skills, Matthew Coffey, said: “Successful colleges always had strong leadership and management and the importance of this cannot be underestimated.

“All the elements of this report are inextricably linked to the actions and behaviours of leaders and managers and the example they set.

“In outstanding and improving colleges, staff were more willing to accept change and could easily describe what their college stood for. As a result, leadership teams were better placed to act decisively to tackle underperformance and secure improvement.”

Rob Wye, LSIS chief executive, said: “This report confirms that the importance of outstanding leadership and management, underpinned by informed governance, cannot be underestimated.

“It is also clear that robust and honest self-review and reflection is a vital ingredient of any provider’s improvement journey. The evidence in this report confirms what many will have thought for a long time — that the best colleges are those where the teaching, learning and assessment delivers excellent results that match the needs of learners, employers and the local community.”

The report was welcomed by the Association of School and College Leaders. Its colleges spokesperson, Stephan Jungnitz, said: “I’m pleased the report recognises the pivotal role of college leaders in driving forward institutional success, as well as the complex and demanding range of areas they have to deal with, from buildings and finance to teaching and learning.

“As we well know, each college is unique and the road to success will be different for each — there is no magic formula. Having said that, the insights in the report will be useful to college leaders.

“For many, it will reinforce what they instinctively already know about improving their institutions.”

*Editor's comment***Subcontracting explosion**

Thanks to our freedom of information request we know that in the first nine months of 2011/12 subcontracting more than tripled.

This is not surprising, as numerous policies introduced by the current government made this inevitable. I predicted this outcome in *The Guardian* last year.

However, subcontracting is recognised as high risk and what is unexpected and concerning is that it is being taken on mainly, not by training providers, but by FE colleges.

Why are large colleges taking these unnecessary risks, which in the not too distant past led to the closure of Bilston College?

The reason is typically a belief that using partners presents the only way to quickly respond to changing government priorities.

This is a lazy and short-term attitude which is already damaging the reputation of the sector (see the case of Luis Michael Training).

Behind closed doors, the government recognises this is a problem, and the Skills Funding Agency has introduced new policies to measure the genie, but it may be too late to put it back in the bottle.

If I were a college principal or governor, I would quickly take back ownership, as previous subcontracting explosions have ended in tears.

Nick Linford, editor

Corrections

Even when the simple things go wrong — like calling a he, a she — a reporter should hang their head in shame.

Being new to the FE sector, its big hitters and endless source of acronyms and abbreviations, is no excuse for deputy editor Chris Henwood to fall foul of a gender gremlin.

Especially as Chris Taylor, from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, had so kindly provided HER opinion for a page two article last week, on an Ofqual consultation on ESOL.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.

continued from page 1

FE 'sells immigration'

sector and, as such, their students are subject to fewer restrictions than those at further education establishments.

"The system is now more rigorous and accountable, with all education providers expected to take their immigration responsibilities seriously."

In August London Metropolitan University hit the headlines as the first university to have its HTS revoked by the agency, which said it was not making proper checks. The university has recently been given permission to challenge the decision in court.

John Mountford, international director at the Association of Colleges (AoC), said: "It is important that when UKBA talk about further education they make a distinction between private for-profit colleges and state-supported FE institutions, which is not always the case... Our members take their role as sponsors seriously and have no interest in abusing the system."

He continued: "As for UKBA's assertions, we have never seen the statistics that support these. We know, in fact, that there has never been a like-for-like study of how different sponsors perform. It is interesting, however, to note that this is the position from which UKBA is coming."

Providers can only recruit foreign students if they have a HTS licence. The criteria for such a licence was changed last year: it used to be set depending on the level of the course not on where the student studied. Now there are separate requirements for colleges and universities.

Colleges say that universities have more leeway to attract foreign students, as their students can spend more time on work placements and in paid employment, and colleges are not allowed to run pre-sessional courses or administer their own English tests.

Greenwich Community College in south London lost its HTS in December last year. Gary Chin, the principal, said: "There is an unfair playing field between colleges and universities."

For example, an international student studying on a Higher National Certificate (HNC) at university is allowed to work for 20 hours a week, whilst an FE student on the

same HNC can only work for 10 hours a week.

"Our frustration is that a market that was going to be lucrative for FE only a few years ago, at a time when we need to diversify more than ever as a sector, has now become too big a risk for most colleges to invest the time and resources in."

Sue Sharkey, international director of Bournemouth and Poole College, said the number of international enrolments is down this year after a UKBA ban on colleges running pre-sessional courses. These are booster language courses for students that do not have the level of English needed for their chosen course.

"Colleges should have the same

"There does seem a tendency to act in a rather hasty manner with colleges"

opportunities as universities," she said, adding that the unfair treatment would drive colleges to work in other countries, rather than attract students to the UK.

Mr Mountford said HTS should mean the same for all institutions, and questioned why only universities could administer English tests.

"The agency is, in a sense, saying that universities are a better sponsor because they have the expertise to administer their own tests, whereas a further education college has to rely on an external partner. In our opinion that simply isn't fair. If you're weighing up where to study, that's the sort of thing that affects your decision."

Students studying at a university are allowed to carry out a work placement for 50 per cent of their course, but those at a college can only spend 33 per cent of their course out of the classroom. Mr Mountford said this is "ridiculous" given that colleges specialise in employer-based programmes.



John Mountford, AoC

Colleges must maintain a certain number of points to keep their HTS licence. They can lose points if, for example, a student is refused a visa or does not attend their course once in the UK.

Mr Mountford said this system makes colleges more vulnerable than universities because they are generally smaller institutions.

"If you're trying to manage a number-based system you're at a big disadvantage if you're only recruiting 10 students a year, because you only have to lose one or two students and then you're off the scale. If you have 2,000 students then you can lose a lot more, because it's all done on percentages."

The international director believes there is a tendency for the border agency to take a "more robust" and "less understanding" approach when granting colleges an HTS licence.

"There doesn't seem to be always a huge amount of willingness to fully understand the college offer."

"From our experience and the feedback we get from members, there does seem a tendency to act in a rather hasty manner with colleges. Some that have lost their HTS status have it reinstated on appeal."

The AoC regularly meets the Border Agency and Mr Mountford is encouraged by the understanding and flexibility it has shown with some of the cases discussed. "Our wish is for them to become better partners. To work with any college that does have issues or problems before any quick draconian decision - which they're not going to overturn on reflection or further examination."

Comments**Is the De Vere case a one-off, asks Marsden**

Funny how the £43m allocated to Zenos this year (2012/13) is ignored by *FE Week* editor Nick Linford when everyone knows very few of their 'apprentices' had jobs last year.

Did they get approval similar to De Vere and why is an FoI asking this, and Zenos's activity for 2011/12, not put in?

Is it that Pearson advertises with *FE Week* and the newspaper may be worried about future revenues, allegedly? *FE Week* may want to explain this or more appropriately, investigate.

Dave [no other details supplied]

FE Week response

As stated in the original story from September 24, *FE Week's* FoI request to the Skills Funding Agency was for details of all providers given permission to run access to apprenticeships with more than 10 per cent of students out of work.

However, both the agency and the National Apprenticeship Service said they were unable to provide the information requested.

FE Week will be revisiting the access to apprenticeships issue.

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Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by *FE Week* upon request.

FE Week profile

David Igoe ~ his story

Holly Welham

@hollywelham

The chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum talks to *FE Week*

While searching for biographical information about David Igoe to prepare for the interview I reap little reward Google coughs up only a few facts – the name of his secondary school, his degree in education management at the University of Bristol and his job as principal at Cadbury Sixth Form College.

At Igoe's office in Westminster conversation surprisingly twists and turns; before Bristol he spent two years training to be a Catholic priest, began an architecture degree, settled on becoming a music teacher, despite having taken no formal music exams, and taught at one of the most radical schools in the country.

"It's depressing now how everyone is forced to see their education and qualification choices in terms of employment routes," says the chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum. He believes that the notion of education for education's sake has been lost pre-university and that we need to give young people far more opportunities to explore their interests at school and college.

"I am fighting for a way, a philosophy of education, which seems to have disappeared," says the 62-year-old.

Igoe was brought up in Staffordshire in a very traditional Catholic family by dad William, who was the head of a primary school and president of the Catholic Teachers Federation, and mum Margaret, who had a range of jobs, including running a grocery business, she looking after him and his six siblings. He was sent to a seminary at the age of 11, where he was given a "strict rigid education".

He describes his time at Cotton College as "all about corporal punishment and spartan living.

"We were flogged for the most minor of discrepancies...It was pretty grim."

The harsh environment of the seminary gave him resilience and self-confidence, but hindered him emotionally.

"Most of us who went through that kind of experience pay an emotional price; we become almost too self-contained and relationships can be quite challenging for us. We know how to be in difficult circumstances, but we're not very good at empathising with how others might be feeling. You learn to hold everything in," he says.

"Certainly when I left the seminary I had a lot of growing up to do on an emotional level and that characterised my twenties." He now lives in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, and is married to Iryna with three children, Ben, 34, Gemma, 31, and Matthew, 11.

After training to be a music teacher at a college in Twickenham, Igoe's first job was at a school staggeringly different from the seminary he had attended.

Run by late visionary Peter Hastings, Trinity Catholic school in Leamington Spa was renowned for its innovation.

Pupils were allowed to draw graffiti in corridors and call teachers by their first names. There was also a homework ban for the youngest children while the curriculum was dominated by lessons of a more practical nature.

Igoe vividly remembers turning up for his "bizarre" interview with Hastings, which "wasn't even a chat". The head teacher had long grey hair and was wearing a "slightly stained" fisherman's jumper and sandals.

"Morale is just devastating. Nobody feels good about working for a sixth-form college anymore"

"He was sitting in a little room, which apparently was his office, but I thought was some sort of cupboard, and he was writing notes on the cardboard inserts of shirts. There was a big pile of them on the table," says Igoe.

Hastings asked him only one question – where he saw himself in five years – and after being satisfied by Igoe's "spluttering answer" sent him off to the head of theology.

"[The school] was totally radical and very risky, but by force of his own personality [Hastings] got away with it," he says.

It was, he says, a fantastic place to learn the craft of teaching and "oddly" five of his colleagues from the school also went on to become principals of sixth-form colleges.

Having taught for four years at the school his career leapt once again to a starkly different institution, as he joined a "traditional little school" on the south coast.

"It was a total culture shock for me. I went from having this visionary, charismatic, highly intelligent head teacher who had a very clear view of what education was all about, to what I describe as a the kind of prefect head teacher whose main concern was making sure that everybody in their classroom was quiet," he says.

"I found it so stifling."

He "survived" two years before he moved to run the theology department at St Brendan's Sixth Form College, in Bristol, and later became the principal of Cadbury Sixth Form College.

During this time he became passionate about the value of sixth-form colleges and is angry they are being hit so hard by cuts and government policy.

"The morale is just devastating. Nobody feels good about working for a sixth-form



college anymore. They ought to be feeling good, not smug about their achievements, but they ought to feel [they're] doing a good job," he adds.

"All the indicators put us at the top, we outperform every other sector. Why are we being kicked so hard? We don't understand it."

Igoe is very critical of the government's drive to raise standards through competition, arguing that it is not a level playing field.

He points out that a student at an academy on average receives £7,300 of funding, but a pupil at sixth-form college gets £4,800.

"In that game you have winners and losers and things go to the wall," he says.

"What about the young people in those institutions that are made to go to the wall? Don't they deserve the same opportunities? Shouldn't we be working collaboratively to ensure that the provision across an area is the best quality that it could possibly be?"

"We're not making units. We're making people. You can't afford to have any failures in education."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

My Family and Other Animals by Gerald Durrell. The kind of childhood I would have loved to have had

What did you want to be when you were younger?
Anything but a teacher

What do you do to switch off from work?

Play golf, badly. Play the piano (less badly). Read popular science books, especially anything by Simon Singh

Who, living or dead, would you invite to a dinner party?

Pierre de Fermat (to see if he really did solve his last theorem)

What would your super power be?

Invisibility

FE Week Experts

Views on Ofsted's new 'Trip Adviser' website



“Ofsted's Learner View website is an interesting and helpful development”

Toni Pearce, vice president FE at the National Union of Students adds her voice of support to Ofsted's new website

It is welcome that Ofsted has recognised the need to review its methods for consulting learners. Further education is rapidly changing and the National Union of Students has been lobbying for a long time for learners, as the primary stakeholders in the sector, to be involved in quality improvement.

Arrangements for involving the student voice in the direction of education have become more formalised to ensure that learners can experience the same benefits across providers. As a result, greater emphasis has been placed on closing the gap between student representation and the decisions resulting from student input.

Recognising the importance of informal links between students and staff has also become a crucial element in ensuring the involvement of active learners in both planning and decision-making.

Although learners have had the opportunity to communicate with inspectors, through email and in person, for a number of years, we have not been satisfied that the opportunity to do so was open to everyone.

Ofsted's Learner View site represents an opportunity for the student voice to become properly embedded into inspection processes – something that is particularly important as we move towards more 'light touch' inspections, and where continuous audit of provision will be crucial in ensuring that learners get a fair deal.

Learner View, from the union's viewpoint, therefore is an interesting and helpful development. It's encouraging that Ofsted have made further steps to engage learners in the evaluation and inspection of their provision, particularly by providing online and accessible tools to support them to do so.

The union worked extensively with Ofsted in the formation of the new common inspection framework and the Learner View tool. It is exciting to see the highest level of the sec-

tor taking seriously the views and opinions of students.

It is particularly welcome that Learner View will be open continuously to contributions from every learner, whatever their age and whether or not their college or learning provider is being inspected - and that data will be made available online.

The ability to see 'live' data on the student views of any given provider is a big step forward for transparency in the sector. It is great to see Ofsted take such a bold move. These are important steps towards protecting all learners against poor provision.

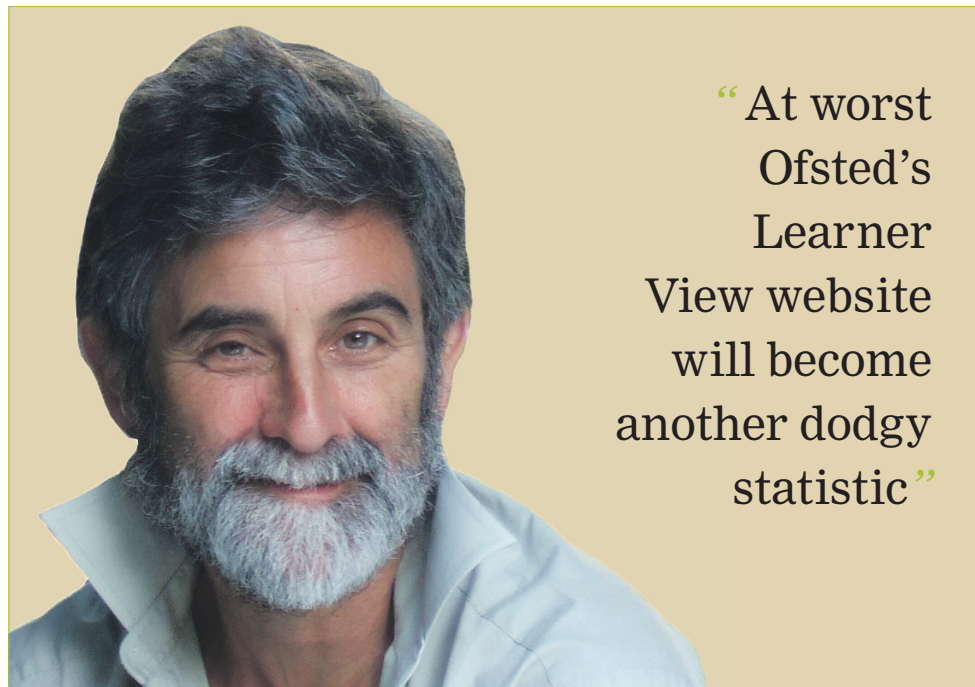
Learner View will have an interesting introduction and may well receive a varied reaction and initial take-up. It is important to remember that the success of this and other learner voice strategies rely heavily on the emphasis placed on student engagement from the provider. Learner View alone is not a panacea.

However, if properly implemented alongside investment and support from providers, it does have the scope to revolutionise the way that students give feedback on their experience.

This new tool has the potential to recognise rapid change in the further education sector by supporting the engagement of all sorts of learners from different backgrounds and disciplines who might not have the opportunity to feed into regular inspection practices - apprentices, distance learners, evening students and mature students. That expansion can only be positive.

Combining recognition of the diversity of the further education provision and of the student body with the imperative to engage students in their education suggests that the Learner Voice could succeed.

Toni Pearce, vice president FE at the National Union of Students



“At worst Ofsted's Learner View website will become another dodgy statistic”

Mick Fletcher, visiting research fellow at the Institute of Education and member of the Policy Consortium, casts a critical eye over Ofsted's new Learner View website

Ofsted has officially launched its Learner View website — an on-line mechanism for collecting feedback from students about the institutions they attend.

The Daily Telegraph was predictably delighted. Under the strap line “teenagers will be able to shop sub-standard colleges,” it explained how the Trip Adviser-style service could be used by the education watchdog in making judgments about an institution.

No doubt the move will be welcomed with varying degrees of caution in the sector. Listening to the learner voice is in keeping with the zeitgeist, and no one wants to oppose greater transparency.

More importantly, for an institutional leader, contradicting Ofsted in public is a little like challenging Robespierre in his prime. All the more important, therefore, for those not on the payroll or under threat of no-notice inspection, to point out the serious flaws.

Firstly, it is not clear how many completed questionnaires will be needed before Ofsted publish responses for an institution — the website doesn't say what the minimum is. Ofsted may be waiting to see how many people use it. A higher threshold would clearly give more credibility, but equally it would look bad if few institutions achieved it.

It is not clear whether the threshold is linked in any way to the size of the student population. Ten returns from a provider with 40 apprentices is impressive, but twice the number of learners from a college with 20,000 enrolments would be meaningless. So will Ofsted report the size of the student cohort alongside the responses to give context to the comments?

Crucially, it seems there is no way of knowing how representative a sample those responding are.

According to the Learner View FAQs, respondents must give an email address and a password and they may report on up to three providers. They do not appear to give details of the course they attend or their personal characteristics, or even whether they have finished the course, are halfway through it

or only just begun. Without such data, it is difficult to begin to interpret the significance of the results.

One thing we can be clear about, however, is that those filling in the form will not be a random cross-section of the student population. Those with a real or imagined grievance will be over-represented as will, in some cases, those encouraged to give favourable responses. At worst it will become another dodgy statistic.

The lack of course level information and analysis is one of the major flaws in the scheme. For most students, particularly part-time ones, it is the course rather than the institution that matters. And most of the questions they will be asked relate to the course. For a prospective student, it's a bit like general Trip Adviser ratings for, say, restaurants in Madrid, or accommodation in Bangkok, rather than anywhere specific you might want to look at.

Why then, with all these problems might Ofsted be doing this, particularly when the well-established Learner Satisfaction Survey does a similar job far more professionally?

The suspicion hanging over Ofsted has to be that it is simply attempting to curry favour with political masters. Their view that the market is best is so deeply ingrained that the public sector is regularly visited with caricatures of market mechanisms. Think, for example, of the endless stream of accounts and vouchers purporting to empower the user, or information on choices that no one asked for and few use.

The truth that even Michael Gove concedes in relation to exam boards, is that the market doesn't always work in education. It's not a commodity that is bought, but a process in which you engage.

Learning requires effort and commitment from learners as well as teachers. To judge it as you would a weekend in Benidorm is deeply demeaning.

Mick Fletcher, visiting research fellow at the IoE and member of the Policy Consortium

FE Week Experts

We must look outward

International partnerships are vital to bring out the best in FE, says Amarjit Basi, Principal of New College Nottingham, in a comment on a recent speech by the chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw

Sir Michael's advice that colleges should "worry more about Deptford not Delhi" have provoked a diverse range of views. As an FE college that is sponsoring a new venture in Delhi, it inspires us to explain how international partnerships enable us to link to our community diaspora, and to extend educational opportunity to our students.

Like Delhi, Nottingham is young, ambitious, innovative and cosmopolitan. Once famous for lace and other manufacturing, it is now 84 per cent service-based, re-creating itself around the international knowledge. And some of Nottingham's fastest growing and most successful small businesses come from our Indian community.

Delhi, the largest commercial centre in northern India, has economic growth of about 11 per cent a year. Like Nottingham, it has a strong dependency on the service sector, and a shared recognition that advanced manufacturing, clean technologies and entrepreneurship underpin further and sustainable future growth.

Report after report from major research organisations, such as the OECD, the McKinsey Institute, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), focus on the changing profile of inter-

national research and development (R&D), education, training and learning. The WEF, for example, expect that within five years, about 30 per cent of multinational companies will locate more than a quarter of their R&D in emerging economies.

As China, India and Brazil flex their R&D muscles, and innovative approaches to learning gather pace, such as mobile learning technologies and new Internet strategies, not being involved in international vocational developments risks cutting off the flow of ideas from some of the most dynamic economies in the world.

It is these economies that in 20 years will be recognised as setting the standard for educational innovation and R&D. According to a report from McKinsey, India and China alone are expected to swell the global graduate workforce by a net 184 million over the next two decades, providing two-thirds of the world's increase in science and engineering graduates - with India, in particular, likely to produce a surplus of high-skill workers.

So we must look outward. International initiatives need to bring the best of educational practice within reach of each college's local community, and enhance their capacity to deliver high quality outcomes for their learners and communities.

Indeed, current and planned reforms of our educational system stress that for too long we have been inward-looking, and that standards that do not take account of international benchmarks sell our young people short.

"The race to the top is as critical in Deptford as it is in Delhi"



The IPPR report 'Oceans of Innovation: The Atlantic, the Pacific, Global Leadership and the Future of Education' (2012) offers a way forward. It argues that the pace of worldwide innovation is now such that in the future 'everyone has to think like an entrepreneur'. This crucially links trends in worldwide R&D and the accompanying innovation spin-offs with the need for entrepreneurial learning.

We must seek out the best educational practice across the world, with a conscious strategy of cross-fertilisation of ideas and innovation. The race to the top for our students depends upon academic and vocational excellence, but will be differentiated by those individuals, communities and economies that demonstrate entrepreneurial mindsets. Only through this will our students benefit from the best ideas from across the world, and be supported to compete in the world market for skilled labour.

Curiosity, creativity and connectivity are king in a world where innovation and enterprise have become watchwords for economic success.

As a founding member of the Gazelle Colleges Group, we are committed to playing a pivotal

role connecting to global labour markets and innovation networks. In our case, this means working in partnership with local employers and entrepreneurs - many with global presence (Experian, Alliance Boots, Speedo, Rolls-Royce and Capital One) - to support our students to realise their personal aspirations and to prosper when they emerge into a global labour market.

We are planning to open a vocational centre in Delhi to support the much-needed development of intermediate and higher level vocational and technical skills in India's rapidly growing construction and service economy. It will also allow us to improve teaching, learning and training in Nottingham and to better prepare learners for the global marketplace.

We must actively interact with and measure ourselves against the rest of the world to enable this nation's students to win 'the race to the top'. In this way, we believe that we will enhance our students' transition to meaningful employment, support business growth and contribute to community well-being.

The race to the top is as critical in Deptford as it is in Delhi.

Amarjit Basi, principal of New College Nottingham

Empowering learners through new legislation

The Education Act 2011 has been widely heralded as a positive move for the FE sector, providing colleges with significant new freedoms to develop and deliver more learner-focused services.

But, like any new legislation, the Act has brought with it a range of new challenges. Elizabeth Delaney, associate at business law firm DWF, looks at how to make the most of the Act's new freedoms.

Greater autonomy

With the government seeking to put FE and sixth-form colleges on a similar footing to charities operating within the independent / private sector, the Act has reduced the financial restrictions and controls faced by FE institutions.

This financial autonomy will allow colleges to be more creative in how they initiate new training schemes to meet the needs of employers and learners.

Direct central government oversight will also be reduced, allowing colleges to dedicate more time and resources to supporting learners.

By exempting high performing colleges from routine Ofsted inspections, for example, the Act will allow teachers to focus on the needs of their students, rather than on meeting targets.

Constitutional reform

The Act will allow colleges to change their constitutional structures and governance procedures. They now have the right to modify and replace their constitutional instruments and articles without seeking permission. This will allow them to introduce more flexible structures and develop more effective ways of working.

They can dissolve and move to more flexible legal forms if considered appropriate. This is a major step, and will allow FE institutions to look at adopting innovative business structures - such as social enterprise models or joint venture companies - or to develop strategic alliances with other educational institutions so that they can share best practice.

A bright future

The changes have been introduced to create a more transparent marketplace in which colleges are accountable directly to their stakeholders - their learners and local community - rather than central government. This will be reinforced by the introduction of student funding streams which are easier to access, and to find out about.

Stakeholder engagement will take on a new level of importance as colleges strive to use their increased powers to develop new and better services. As recent Department of

Business, Innovation and Skills draft regulation has made clear, the government intends for stakeholder consultation to be a central element in implementing structural and / or constitutional changes.

The government's ultimate ambition is that the changes to FE will help to support a virtuous circle, where colleges compete to attract learners by developing more innovative services and delivery methods that meet local demand and improve quality. This, in turn, is expected to create a more diverse sector.

Getting on board

The immediate impact of the Act will differ between institutions. Some colleges will feel that their existing structures do not prevent them from achieving their objectives, while others may feel that they can deliver better results if they implement a radically new business model.

However, before coming to any conclusions on which path to take, decision-makers - governors or chief executives - need to review their institution's existing constitutional documents and consider whether or not they provide the flexibility needed to deliver the college's strategic objectives.

It is important not to go through the upheaval of changing legal form purely because of the apparent attractiveness of alternative



models; in many cases colleges may well be able to achieve their aims through much more subtle methods.

Partnerships are likely to become a more important aspect of the FE sector as accountability is devolved to local stakeholders. Colleges may find that the most effective way to support their learners and wider community is to work with a local academy, university or employer.

Elizabeth Delaney, DWF associate

FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empira**TM



From left: Jordan Minchell, Dame Kelly Holmes, Olympic gold medallist Nicola Adams and Liam Kelly. Pic: Ian McClelland

Boxing clever with sports programme

Double Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes joined London 2012 boxing star Nicola Adams to pass on their sport skills to students in the north east.

Football freestyler John Whetton was also on hand to teach Gateshead College students tricks at the launch of the sports scheme run by Kelly Holmes Education in which students traded blows with gold medallist Nicola in a boxing masterclass.

More than 400 sport academy students will be tutored by some of the country's top sporting talent as part of the programme, with double cycling Olympic medallist Bryan Steel and judo Paralympian Darren Harris providing coaching.

The college is the first education provider to work with the Olympic medallist's

foundation. "For me this is a great way to put something back to support the next generation and inspire the students to dream big and achieve their sporting goals," said Dame Kelly. "I'm looking forward to sharing the journey with these talented students."

Boxing studies student Liam Kelly, 18, from Consett, said: "To be able to come to college and be coached by Olympic champions is absolutely amazing and something that we'll all remember for the rest of our lives."

Nicola Adams said it was great to meet everyone at the college. "They gave me a terrific reception."

"The programme with Kelly Holmes Education is fantastic and the students have such amazing opportunities to learn from the very best."

Cheltenham Fashion Week student win



From left: George Davies, Laxmi Chavada, 20, course leader Sarah Clark, Stephanie Allen, 21, model

Models stormed the catwalk dressed in creations by Gloucestershire's best young fashion designers in sell-out shows for Cheltenham Fashion Week.

Hosted at Gloucestershire College, the shows were judged by designer George Davies, who launched the Per Una range at Marks & Spencer and George at Asda. He was joined by fashion journalist Sarah Hayley and hair stylist Stuart Holmes. More than 800 guests came to see the designs from 20 education providers across the county.

Laxmi Chavada, 20, and Stephanie Allen, 21, won £1,000 for Gloucestershire College when they were crowned the winners of the college and sixth-form category, and were offered a two-week placement with Mr Davies' team.

"The standard of the show was truly excellent, nothing I have seen has been average," said Mr Davies. "Congratulations to everyone who has taken part. The winning designs are amazing. As a designer it's important to be versatile and you can see from the pieces I have chosen they do this perfectly."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

Chefs cook up Olympic culinary experience



From left: Kimberley Phimister, Charlie Diggall, Karolina Korzeniowska, Vilson Delishaj, Javoy McKenzie, Omar Ben-Haddouch, Albert Gelderbloem, Ainsley George

Top chefs at the Olympics were so impressed by the culinary skills of a hearing-impaired learner that they've offered him a job.

Hospitality and catering student Ryan Easton, 19, cooked for more than 13,000 athletes during a 10-week placement at the Olympic Park athletes restaurant, serving some of its biggest stars, including Usain Bolt and Mo Farah.

He was one of 52 students from Redbridge College in Sussex given the opportunity to work as a full-time paid professional chef at the Games.

"It was very hard work each day but if there were any problems we all helped each other. The people I was working with were all

incredibly nice," said Ryan, who worked as a commis chef.

"I learnt new skills and techniques I hadn't seen before. The thing I will remember most is the respect I received and knowledge I gained from the experienced chefs who acted as my mentors."

Vilson Delishaj, 17, was also feeling the heat at the Olympic Park. "This was my first ever experience of paid work in the industry," he said. "It was great to be able to meet and learn from experienced chefs from all over the world – to get paid as well made it even better."

"Being in the athletes' village was just amazing. Everyone was so friendly and there was a great working atmosphere."

Top Peter Jones student enters the retail den

A promising retail career looks in store for a Midland apprentice already crowned student ambassador of the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy.

Nick Bannister (far right), from the Dragons' Den star's academy at Solihull College, is continuing along the route to success with a place on a national apprenticeship scheme.

The 20-year-old, from Sutton Coldfield, reached the final interview stage with discount retailer Aldi and impressed the panel enough to secure a place on the scheme.

He will be trained in all aspects of retail management within three years to hopefully emerge as a deputy store manager.

"I'm really pleased to have joined Aldi on the apprentice scheme and I'm excited about my future working in retail," said Nick.

"Studying at the academy helped me develop a range of skills including finance and business planning, as well as build my confidence."

Yvonne Malpass, head of retail at Solihull College, said: "We are extremely proud Nick has secured one of the positions working for one of the UK's fastest-growing companies."





Weston College lecturers Ben Hodder and Shaun Canniford, college support worker Mike Kay and carpentry technician Lloyd Duncan with children from Aschcombe Primary School, in Somerset

Fare effort by construction students

It was all aboard for primary school children in Somerset as they hopped on to a double-decker bus converted by construction students into a study area.

The £5,000 project was dreamed up by year 5 and 6 pupils at Aschcombe Primary School. It won a grant from North Somerset Council to pay for materials for the bus, which was carried out free by students at Weston College.

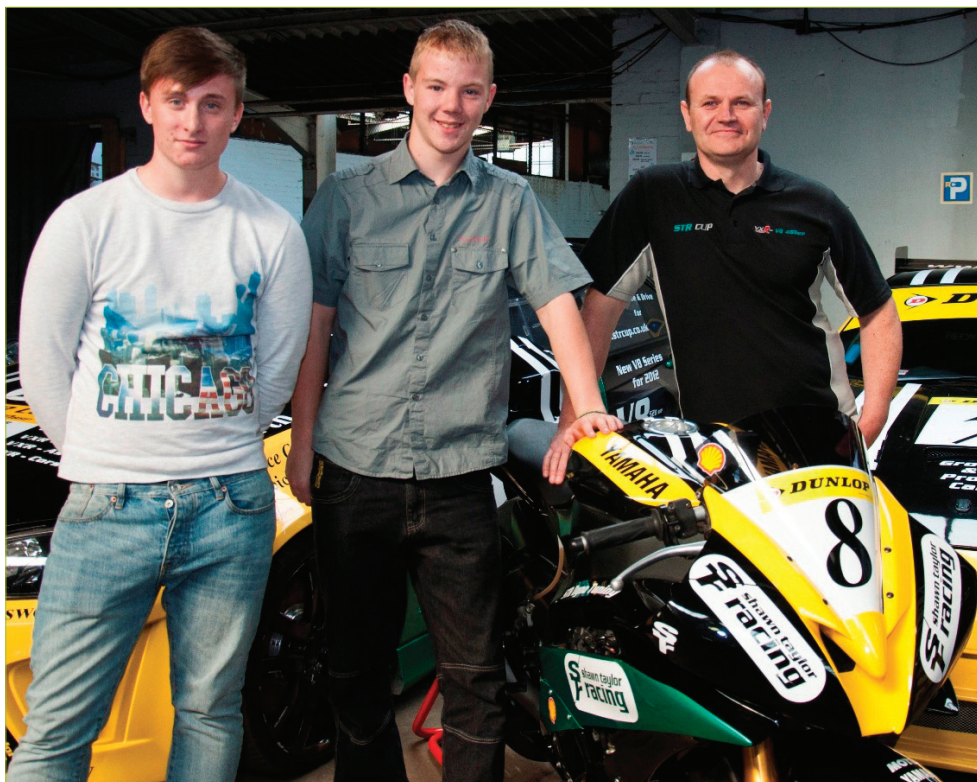
The bus, which was bought in Essex from the internet, has a chill-out zone with bean bags. It is used for lessons as well as at playtime, and has its own bus stop.

Shaun Canniford, construction lecturer, said: "We were delighted to help with such a novel project. The children love what we've created and we hope to get involved with renovating the upper deck."

Tina Langston, teaching assistant, said: "They thought of Astroturf, an old train carriage and even a yurt. We are quite a big school with 420 pupils, so they decided on a double-decker bus as the train carriage was too expensive.

"The children go on ten-at-a-time with little bus tickets and they just love their unique learning bus."

Students race to motoring qualification



City College Norwich students Sam McDowall and Darrian McDonald with Shawn Taylor

The race is on for Norfolk students to get under the bonnet of a Formula Ford racing car on a new course run with Shawn Taylor Racing.

City College Norwich got the racing car for students on its motorsport vehicle maintenance and repair course to tinker with under the guidance of the expert racetrack firm.

Eighteen students are on the one-year course that will give them practical experience of maintaining and repairing cars for optimum racing performance.

All of the students will work towards the

Institute of the Motor Industry level two extended diploma in the subject that could lead to a career as an automotive technician.

Corrienne Peasgood, principal at City College Norwich, said: "We have excellent teachers and facilities for our general motor vehicle courses and it was a logical extension to offer this exciting new course in motorsport vehicle maintenance and repair."

Shawn Taylor, from Shawn Taylor Racing, said: "As a former student of the college, my race team and I are very excited to be working in partnership with City College."

Students build a better cabinet



From left: Chichester College's gold-winning cabinet maker, Edward Harringman with celebrity Tommy Walsh

A cabinet maker struck gold as his West Sussex college scooped the UK's best performer title at a construction sector competition.

Celebrity builder Tommy Walsh, formerly of BBC show Ground Force, was on hand to dish out awards with Edward Harringman, 19, claiming top honours at the Skillbuild finals.

Meanwhile, Chichester College got the overall award for the performance of its five level two and three diploma students at the Preston event, held over three days last month.

The college beat 184 other colleges to the

best performer gong with students Edward, Steve Pickton, 18, and silver-winning Alistair MacAllan, 22, competing at cabinet making.

Ben Shotter, 19, came fourth in carpentry and Richard Freshville, 29, was put through his paces at painting and decorating.

John Bradbury, construction course leader at Chichester College, said: "This was a total shock — to think we outperformed so many colleges is excellent."

Principal Shelagh Legrave said: "This is a wonderful result. I'd like to congratulate our five students who competed, and in particular Edward Harringman."



From left: Ste Fisher, Alex Roberts, Sarah Ash, Daniel Smith and Merryn Dowson

Westminster gig for student five-piece

Five young musicians will rock the House of Commons when they perform for Speaker John Bercow in November.

Stoneway – made up of Ste Fisher, Alex Roberts, Sarah Ash, Daniel Smith and Merryn Dowson from Warrington's Priestley College – won the opportunity in a national competition promoting intellectual property rights and live music.

"We were absolutely ecstatic when we found out we had won because so many other

tracks had been sent in," said 16-year-old Merryn, who is studying A level music.

Stoneway – who can regularly be seen performing in pubs around Runcorn and Warrington – sent their track to Weaver Vale MP Graham Evans who chose them to represent his constituency.

"I'm absolutely thrilled for Stoneway, who as well as being excellent young musicians have been wonderful ambassadors for their college and for the local community," he said.

FE Week investigates

Dozens of shared service projects



Holly Welham

@hollywelham

Organisations coming together to develop services that can be shared, including teaching and learning as well as office systems, are a year into their projects.

The 157 Group and Association of Colleges (AoC) were each given a Shared Services Grant of £2.3m by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to set up ten projects.

Christine Doubleday, deputy executive director of the 157 Group, said: "Real and worthwhile savings can be made by sharing and collaboration. The college projects report a cumulative saving to date of £1.5million."

One of the AoC projects set up with the Shared Services Grant has designed a national skills qualification framework for adults who want to be entrepreneurs.

Nine partners came together to develop the curriculum, including Richmond Adult Community College, Tower Hamlets College, City of Bath College and Morley College.

Christina Conroy, project director, said The Enterprise Agenda for Adults – its official title – has been so successful partly because it focuses on teaching and learning, one of the most expensive costs for the sector.

Since the qualification framework became available in September, 25 colleges and adult learning services have signed up to share the curriculum, giving them access to teaching materials and the online activities for students, which accounts for half of the course.

Ms Conroy, former principal of Richmond



Adult Community College, said the project has saved the sector more than £1.5m in the past year.

Ms Doubleday said 157 Group's projects had been deliberately kept relatively small "to achieve deep implementation and learning".

At the beginning of next year the organisation will publish a technical guide on shared services and evaluative research from



the University of Warwick on the projects that it carried out.

The SFA said the programmes have developed approaches that deliver "greater value for money".

The grant given was additional to the agency's core budget and there are currently no plans for further grants, but the SFA said that it is continuing to support the AoC and

Sunderland College students are getting the benefits of joined up administration among members of the North East Shared Services Project. Far left: Christina Conroy, Enterprise Agenda for Adults. Left: Kathy Bland, North East Shared Services Project

157 Group to pass on the lessons learned and is encouraging the uptake of ideas that have been developed.

A 157 Group project, now given the go ahead, is to develop a toolkit to explain how to overcome the major barriers to shared services, such as VAT and competition law. It will be available from early next year.

In November last year the Chancellor announced changes to VAT, stating that it would introduce a VAT exemption for services shared between VAT-exempt bodies.

Savings of more than £700,000 have been made on the North East Shared Services Pathfinder project, says project manager Kathy Bland.

Ms Bland, who has been seconded from her senior manager role at Sunderland College to work on the programme full-time, said the funding has made a massive difference: "We would never have got this far if we hadn't got the grant...releasing me from my senior management role in the college has been a big factor," she said.

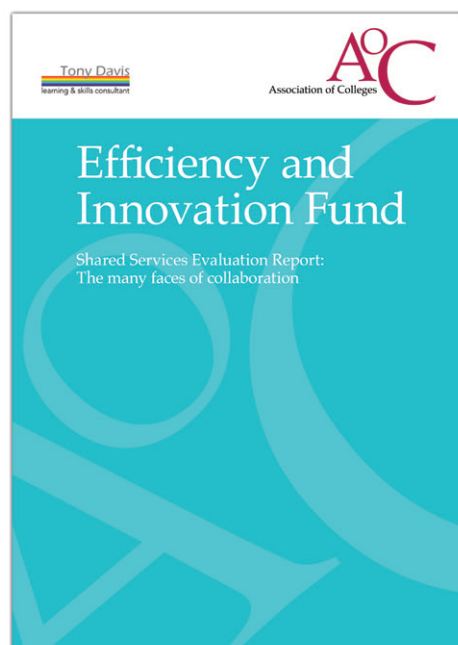
"I've been able to fully concentrate on the issues and go up and down the country where the need has arisen to talk to different people and remove the barriers...It would have taken me 10 years otherwise."

mark their anniversaries

Two years ago the Association of Colleges (AoC) was given a £4.6m Efficiency and Innovation Fund (EIF) by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to look at the feasibility of shared services. This is separate to the Shared Services Grant, which was given to the AoC a year ago.

Background research on shared services and 41 projects were set up using the funds. A report evaluating the work, which involved 230 organisations, has been published by the AoC. The key findings of The Many Faces of Collaboration report were:

1. "Of the EIF project's unique selling points, its ability to overcome previously entrenched isolationist views was perhaps its greatest: providers seeing the distinct benefits of sharing practice, ideas and issues rather than going it alone. Solutions were most often born out of a search for a third way, rather than simply taking on the perceived or accepted good practice of one particular partner –



innovation in action."

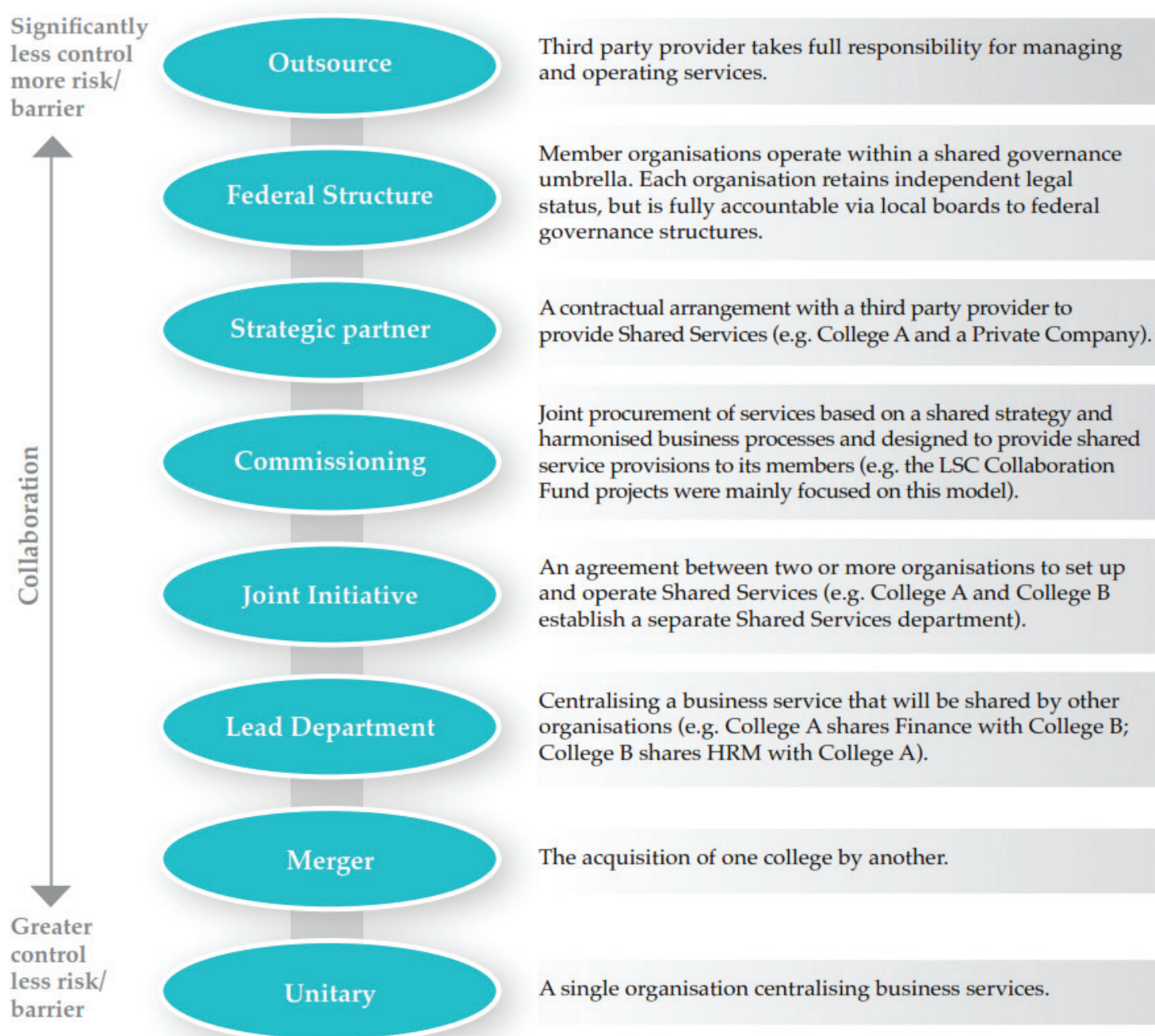
2. "Of those projects that found shared

services overly challenging, there was perhaps too much reliance on the creative thinking of external consultants rather than themselves, and a lack of clarity on what was to be achieved – being overwhelmed by keeping all options open for too long. Having too many partners was also a common issue, as was failing to realise that trust and friendship need to be built on low-consequence projects before embarking on inter-organisational change."

3. "What binds the most successful projects together was the clarity of their vision and their determination to overcome the challenges and barriers to success. They had a keen focus on the impact they intended to have, rather than on the list of jobs they had to do.

They engaged key stakeholders, such as front-line staff, in the change process, and in so doing developed not just trust, but new friendships between peers in the partner organisations."

FE Collaboration Structures



Vehicles for collaboration: The taxonomy above is based on Dr Kathy Bland's Continuum of Collaboration and Control, as published in Shared Services Further Education Centric, 2010. Download the publication from www.aoc.co.uk/shared-services/materials

AoC projects funded using the shared services grant

The Enterprise Agenda for Adults

Aims to create an Adult Enterprise curriculum, supported by an efficient delivery approach, which can be rolled-out nationwide.

Wessex Federation

Will examine the creation of a central shared service centre and implementation of a series of cost, efficiency and improvement initiatives across the five colleges.

Federation Development and Shared Services Programme

Will focus on developing an innovative organisational infrastructure for delivering technical/vocational further education, A-levels and higher education in Further Education Colleges

Federation of Strategic Services Project (FeSSP)

Will look at the development and implementation of a federation model for colleges in the delivery of non-core strategic services.

West Midlands SFC Exam Efficiency Consortium

Will establish a scalable group purchasing consortium to leverage discounted fees from major awarding body suppliers.

Project Daedalus

Seeks to establish an outsourced shared services platform available to all colleges operating in the UK.

North East Shared Services Project Limited (NESSP)

Wide ranging back office sharing with legally constituted delivery vehicle.

Services in Sussex and Surrey Colleges

Wide ranging back office sharing by consortium delivery.

Collaborative curriculum development and delivery

Developing and delivering shared curriculum using new technology.

One-Stop-Shop

Collaborative delivery of staff recruitment and student job placement.

157 Group projects funded using the shared services grant

NEW CAMPUS BASILDON



Principal Designate circa £75,000

Do you have the ambition to inspire the next generation?


The Context

The Studio School will open in September 2013 and be based in Basildon. It will provide a unique opportunity to engage young people aged 14-19 of all abilities, who would not otherwise reach their full potential in a traditional school environment. It will provide a high quality, inspirational, personalised learning experience for students, focussed on supporting the transition from school to work. It will support local priorities to raise aspiration and achievement within the community, and tackle the challenge of skills shortages within the area. The curriculum offer will combine academic and vocational qualifications aligned to local employer base.

The Role

This is an exciting prospect for a self motivated professional to lead the provision and team of a Studio School. You will be joining the Academy Trust at a time of the development that provides you with a real opportunity to help us to shape and realise the ambitious plans we have for our learners and our Studio School. You will be leading a team of dedicated and highly-skilled staff in committing to a regeneration of education in a provision that encapsulates all learners and their needs.

The Person

You will be committed to excellence in teaching and learning. You will be an ambitious and experienced leader with highly developed business acumen. The vision of excellence will be clear and strong and you will be able to develop and motivate teams to deliver the levels of service our learners, employers and communities deserve.

We are an equal opportunities employer and value diversity. All appointments are based solely on the merit and abilities of each applicant regardless of age, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or disability. We are committed to safeguarding and promote the welfare of all learners and expect all staff to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake appropriate checks as well as providing proof of your right to work in the UK.

The closing date for the above post is 11 October 2012. Selection will be held on 18 October 2012.

For details of the above post, and an application form, please contact the Seevic College Human Resources dept. on: 01268 882607 quoting the post, or by Email: personnel@seevic-college.ac.uk

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**DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Salary: £50,000 - £55,000 pa

A full-time post based at Robins Wood House, Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham NG8 3NH. However, travel to relevant meetings will be required.

This is an exciting opportunity for a self-motivated professional to play a key role in the EMFEC and ABC Awards Group which is a thriving and growing organisation promoting and supporting excellence in the learning and skills sector. We deliver impartial and responsive support services and intelligence to our member colleges and the wider further education community. We ensure that the voice of the region's colleges is heard, at regional and national level, through the representation service that we provide to the Association of Colleges, East Midlands. EMFEC has a commitment to partnership working as exemplified in the projects and networks which we initiate and lead on behalf of the sector.

As a member of the Group Senior Leadership Team your key responsibility will be to contribute positively to the development of the Company's Group strategic plan, direction and decision-making and proactively work towards the achievement of shared Group organisational vision and goals.

You will be responsible for the strategic management and delivery of the Company's Policy and Professional Development Directorate within EMFEC.

Your communication and people skills must be excellent. You will be an energetic, ambitious and experienced leader with strong and highly developed business acumen. You will have vision and the capacity to make a distinctive contribution within the Group.

Closing date: 12 noon on Wednesday 10 October 2012
Interviews: Friday 26 October 2012 at Robins Wood House,
Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 3NH.

For further details please visit www.emfec.co.uk or
www.abcawards.co.uk or
contact HR on 0115 8541628 or tracyr@emfec.co.uk

navigate

**Ambition.
Success.
Passion.
Inspiration.**

Assistant Principal Head of 'A' Levels & International Baccalaureate
c£70k plus relocation

Recently judged as outstanding across the board in the first 'no notice' pilot inspection by Ofsted, Exeter College provides tertiary education for the city of Exeter and the county of Devon. Teaching, learning and student success are our top priorities; and with success rates well above the national average, we are widely recognised as the College of first choice for 16-18 year old students in the communities we serve.

With over 1800 'A' level and IB students, and learner success rates which rank above sixth-form college averages, this is an excellent opportunity to join an established and collegiate senior team and to play a strategic role in the continued future success of the College, and its 16-18 provision.

If you have experience of leadership in an 'A' level and IB setting and are committed to raising levels of students' achievements through outstanding teaching and learning, recognising the key role all staff play in delivering excellent outcomes for learners, we would like to hear from you.

To find out more go to www.exeterap.co.uk or for an informal and confidential discussion please contact Trudy Searle on 07791 090141 or Mike Galloway on 0844 800 5300.

Closing date: Friday 19th October 2012.

Exeter College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and access for all, irrespective of age, background, race, gender, religion, ability, disability or sexuality. We welcome applications for employment from the whole community.

As women are under represented in the Senior Leadership team, we would particularly welcome applications from female candidates.



**Want to inspire people to
achieve their potential? WE DO!**



These are exciting times for Preston College. A new Principal and Executive Leadership Team are driving forward an Enterprise College vision, providing learners with the skills, attitudes, behaviours and qualifications to realise their ambitions; clients with bespoke training created to meet the current and future needs of their sector; and staff with an exciting, entrepreneurial environment in which to work. With these changes comes opportunity.

Resources Directorate

Head of Management Information Systems and ICT
PC/003

Salary: Up to £48,077 per annum (SCP 48) Hours: Full time 1.0 FTE

As a member of the College Management Team reporting directly to the Executive Director of Resources, the successful applicant will provide effective leadership, strategic direction and management for the College's information service and systems. This will include ensuring the integrity of data is translated into leading edge presentation of management information to be used by the College at all levels, as well as having responsibility for the College's ICT systems.

With a relevant degree/professional qualification or work experience you will have a successful record of managing data, designing highly effective MIS to support decision making and delivering robust ICT systems to enable a reliable platform in which our learners and staff can achieve their full potential. This experience should preferably have been gained within the FE Sector.

Closing date for applications: Friday 19 October 2012 at 12 noon.

Further details on this and other opportunities are available on the College website www.preston.ac.uk

We welcome applications from all sections of the community. For further information and additional vacancies please go to www.preston.ac.uk or telephone 01772 225676 and request an information pack.

TOGETHER WE CAN
MAKE IT HAPPEN



GATSBY

Education team

Competitive salary

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation is one of the largest private supporters of science and engineering education in the UK. We are now looking for a motivated individual to join the team shaping and delivering our activity in this area. Our work centres on developing innovative pilot projects and seeking to influence national policy.

The post-holder will take responsibility for developing and managing a number of projects, many of which will focus on strengthening vocational and technical education. S/he will also develop new ideas for Gatsby activity.

Further details available at [**www.gatsby.org.uk/jobs**](http://www.gatsby.org.uk/jobs)

Closing date: 29 October 2012

Registered charity no. 251988



VICE PRINCIPAL, LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT
c. £70k plus relocation • Halifax

Step into Calderdale College and you'll be struck by the rich mix of vocational courses on offer and a dynamic learning environment where students and staff alike can realise their full potential.

Judged as a good college with outstanding features in 2011 and with success rates on an upward trend, we have high aspirations for our students and the College. We are looking for a new Vice Principal who will help lead us on our journey to outstanding.

A credible and established FE leader, you will have proven experience of innovative curriculum development and high quality learning support across a broad range of courses in a high performing FE college. You will also bring a track record of effective partnership working, leading excellent

teaching and learning practice, and significant experience of quality assurance and improvement techniques.

If you are looking for a role with a broad strategic remit in a forward looking college with a cohesive and ambitious team of managers, staff and governors, we would like to hear from you.

Visit **www.calderdalevp.co.uk** to find out more or contact Trudy Searle on **07791 090141** or Mike Galloway on **0844 800 5300**. Closing date: 19 October.

CALDERDALE COLLEGE



INSPIRING LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN LIFE & IN WORK



GROUP MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATOR
Salary: Circa £25,000

This is an exciting opportunity for someone passionate about marketing to play a key role in the EMFEC and ABC Awards Group which is a thriving and growing organisation.

Working closely with the Senior Leadership Team you will co-ordinate the EMFEC and ABC Awards Group marketing and communications function, developing and implementing appropriate activities to promote and market ABC Awards' and EMFEC's products and services ensuring that the Company gains maximum and targeted market exposure.

You must be an enthusiastic and highly motivated team player with the ability to contribute to the quality and content of all marketing and communications.

You will be forward thinking and innovative and have experience of PR and marketing with an interest in how good communications can support the success of the group. You will need a positive, flexible approach with excellent communication and organisational skills. The ability to remain organised whilst dealing with multiple projects is essential, as is a keen eye for detail, creative copy writing skills and a sound knowledge of online and social media.

The person appointed will be based at Robins Wood House, Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham NG8 3NH. However travel to the Chorley office and relevant meetings will be required.

Closing date: 12 noon on Wednesday 17 October 2012
Interviews: Monday 29 October 2012 at Robins Wood House,
Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 3NH.

For further details please visit www.emfec.co.uk or www.abcawards.co.uk or contact HR on 0115 8541628 or tracyr@emfec.co.uk



**Passionate about learning.
Committed to excellence.**

Visit South Thames College and you'll discover a college brimming with talent. It's a place where potential can flourish and not just for our students - it could be the ideal location for your next career step. We're the largest provider of post-16 education and training in South London and have already established a reputation for high quality provision. We are looking for ambitious individuals who share our commitment to excellence and can be part of a dynamic team working together to achieve our vision of building an outstanding and inclusive College.

Head of Business Development Up to £53k

This role leads our Centre for Employers and Enterprise, which is integral to our ambition to create effective partnerships with employers and other organisations. Our work is hugely varied and incorporates apprenticeships, employability work with the unemployed, workplace learning, training and development, to name but a few. This work is an important income stream for the College, so it's important you can demonstrate commercial flair and a track record in identifying and converting business opportunities. This should be backed up by proven experience of effective curriculum planning, evidence of implementing improvement plans to meet targets, and a good understanding of the enterprise and training sector.

Head of Marketing & Communications Up to £53k

We have a fantastic story to tell. You'll make sure it's heard. And seen. And reported. Whether it's in print, online, or on the airwaves, we want our marketing and communications to be creative, compelling and targeted. You'll promote the College's brand and reputation throughout all of our communications ensuring consistency, effectiveness and a clear return on investment. We expect that you'll be an experienced marketing or PR professional with a track record in devising communications strategies for large, complex customer focused organisations and that your technical expertise is supported by good resource management skills that will help you to get the best out of your team and external suppliers.

For more information about the role and how to apply, please visit www.bloomsburyresourcing.co.uk. For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact our retained consultant, Shahidul Miah, on **07581 230 171**. Closing date: 26 October 2012.

**BLOOMSBURY
RESOURCING**

**south thames
college**
incorporating Merton College


worldskillsuk
The Skills Show

Volunteer Opportunities

the nec
birmingham

10-19 November 2012

Volunteer at the UK's biggest national skills and careers event.

- Help to inspire the next generation
- Add skills to your CV
- Wide range of roles available

Apply today

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Visit: theskillsshow.com

Email: volunteering@theskillsshow.com



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people1st

We're recruiting

People 1st, the sector skills council for the hospitality, passenger transport, travel and tourism sectors, works at the heart of the skills arena in order to raise the ambitions and tackle the skills and labour needs of sector employers.

Programme Delivery Manager – Apprentice 1st - Product Development

£40,000 per annum & benefits

You will be responsible for engaging with employers, stakeholders and other third parties with a particular focus on the promotion of Apprentice 1st to ensure targets for Apprenticeships are met as well as plan and manage the roll out of Apprentice 1st across the UK.

You will be required to support project managers with responsibility for pre-employment and apprenticeship products, to specify and develop products to meet our funded charitable objectives and to create links across projects. Identifying any additional demand from employers and potential commercial opportunities for People 1st and reporting progress in line with reporting requirements will also be key elements of the role.

It is essential that you have a proven background within the Hospitality Industry and that you hold assessor qualifications.

The ideal candidate will have experience of managing complex stakeholder relationships and successful project delivery. This is a full time permanent position based in Uxbridge requiring regular travel across the UK.

To apply please send your covering letter detailing your suitability for the role, along with your CV to jobopportunities@people1st.co.uk by **Thursday 11 October 2012**. A Job Description is available at <http://www.people1st.co.uk/appointments>



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

People 1st is an equal opportunities employer.

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London



Curriculum Manager - Public Services, Fitness and Key Stage 4

Full Time, Permanent – Tottenham or Enfield Centre
Salary range £39,321 - £42,684 per annum - Ref 12/09

You will be a highly motivated, learner-centered Curriculum Manager with the ability to lead and manage a team of committed staff delivering programmes from Level 1 to Level 3 in Public Services and Fitness Qualifications. Vocational experience and a sound knowledge of the Public Services sector is essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies designed to secure excellent success and progression rates for the learners in your area. Experience in KS4 14-16 delivery in an FE environment will be an advantage as there is also responsibility for some KS4 provision in the area.

Curriculum Manager - Construction

Full Time, Permanent - Tottenham Centre
Salary range £39,321 – £42,684 per annum - Ref: 12/10

The School of Construction and the Built Environment is seeking to appoint a Curriculum Manager for our Tottenham Centre. You will have responsibility for Multi-skills, Carpentry and Brickwork vocational areas. Understanding of the curriculum and qualifications structure is essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies to secure excellent success and progression rates. You will have a sound knowledge of the Construction environment to ensure employer and learner needs are met in full.

Curriculum Manager – Creative & Media

Full Time, Permanent - Tottenham Centre
Salary range £39,321 – £42,684 per annum - Ref: 12/11

You will be a highly motivated, learner-centred Curriculum Manager with the ability to lead and manage a team of committed staff delivering programmes from level 1 to level 4. Vocational experience and a sound knowledge of the creative studies and media are essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies designed to secure excellent success and progression rates for the learners in your area.

Curriculum Manager - Business and Tourism

Full Time, Permanent - Enfield Centre
Salary range £38,229 - £41,592 per annum - Ref: 12/12

You will be a highly motivated, learner-centred Curriculum Manager with the ability to lead and manage a team of committed staff delivering programmes from Level 1 to Level 3. Vocational experience and a sound knowledge of the Business and/or Travel & Tourism sectors are essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies designed to secure excellent success and progression rates for the learners in your area.

Curriculum Manager – Hair & Beauty

Full Time, Permanent - Enfield Centre
Salary range £38,229 - £41,592 per annum - Ref: 12/13

You will be a highly motivated, learner-centred Curriculum Manager with the ability to lead and manage a team of committed staff delivering programmes from entry level to Level 3. Vocational and teaching experience and a sound knowledge of the Hair and Beauty sectors are essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies designed to secure excellent success and progression rates for the learners in your area.

37 days annual leave

Closing date: 12th October 2012

For further information visit www.conel.ac.uk/staff/vacancies

Email recruitment@staff.conel.ac.uk

Phone 020 8442 3045 (answerphone)

Our students are award-winning, our provision and facilities are highly rated, our finances are strong and we have the passion to transform lives. We offer the best possible experience to our learners, employers and staff alike. Join us!

Focus on Success

INTERIM MANAGERS - CURRICULUM



FE Associates aims to be the preferred choice for colleges requiring interim managers and support in Curriculum, Quality Improvement, MIS, Finance, IT, and HR.

We are looking to strengthen our team of salaried and self-employed associate interim managers and are inviting applications from leading edge practitioners with current college experience at middle manager, Head of Department level or above.

You will be highly motivated and flexible, conversant with the issues facing FE and at the forefront of your area. Applicants need to be prepared to travel and stay away from home when required. In return we offer a competitive remuneration package and to be part of a friendly and supportive team.

Closing date for applications is Monday 15th October.

For an informal chat please contact Judith Richardson on 01823 337655.

To apply please send your CV by email to judith.richardson@feassociates.com or Judith Richardson, FE Associates, 1 High Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3PG.



Don't forget to check out our jobs board online at:
www.feweek.co.uk



Sales & Marketing Director

Training Company, North of England

This is a long established business that has exciting plans to grow and expand beyond its current geographical area.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a focused and skilled individual to manage the company's existing sales and marketing activities, drive new growth opportunities and be an influential member of the company's Senior Management Team.

You will be someone with vision, self-belief and a firm commitment to achieving results as well as someone who enjoys a challenge and can motivate others around them to ensure a successful team performance.

In return we offer a salary and benefits commensurate with the position and a fantastic opportunity to shape and influence the company's future.

Please forward your CV together with a covering note containing current and expected remuneration to purpleheartsr@gmail.com

Advertise here!

Contact:

chardelle.mason@feweek.co.uk

0208 1234 891



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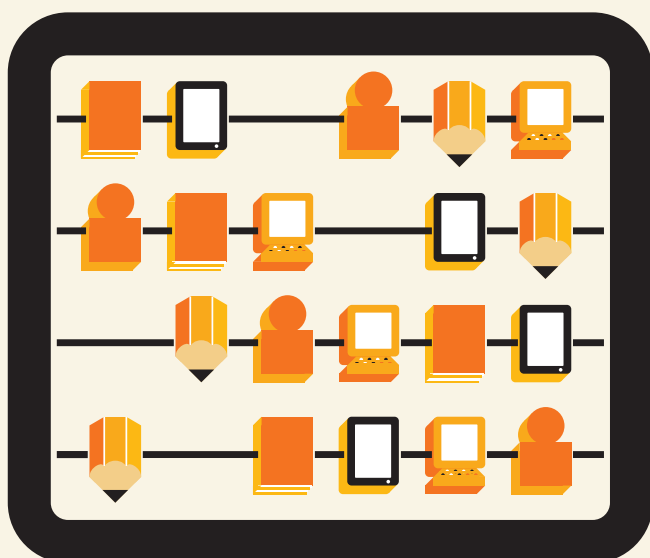
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Pearson. Better learning for everyone, everywhere. You may not realise it, but you've probably been working with Pearson for many years. Our goal is to help people make progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. Through our expertise in education and our commitment to high standards, we have built a reputation for improving learning through innovation and the use of technology. We do this in many ways, all made possible because of the

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PEARSON

FE Week Sudoku challenge

		8				6		
5	3			1			7	8
4			8		2			9
8			3		1			7
	2						1	
1			4		5			2
9			7		6			3
3	5			4			9	6
		2				7		

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

		1	2		9	7		
		6	1		4	9		
	8						1	
4		7				5		6
	5						7	
3		2				4		9
	7						9	
		5	6		2	3		
		4	3		5	8		

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

1	4	7	2	5	9	8	3	6
9	8	3	1	4	6	7	5	2
5	6	2	8	3	7	9	4	1
6	9	8	4	7	5	1	2	3
2	1	5	3	6	8	4	9	7
7	3	4	9	1	2	5	6	8
4	5	6	7	8	3	2	1	9
3	7	9	5	2	1	6	8	4
8	2	1	6	9	4	3	7	5

Difficulty:
EASY

9	1	3	2	6	5	4	8	7
4	7	2	8	9	1	3	6	5
8	5	6	3	7	4	9	2	1
2	8	1	7	3	9	6	5	4
3	6	4	1	5	2	7	9	8
7	9	5	6	4	8	2	1	3
5	2	9	4	1	3	8	7	6
1	3	7	9	8	6	5	4	2
6	4	8	5	2	7	1	3	9

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been pushing my brother Thomas around in the buggy"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford